

Message Text

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70/73

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 /070 W

----- 063942

R 061311Z AUG 76 CORRECTED COPY FOR MRN

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7586

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 11568

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN SHOULD READ 11568 VICE 1568)

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (FOR REF AND PARA 1)

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: SPECULATION ON CPI-CP(M) "DIALOGUE"

REF: NEW DELHI A-52

SUMMARY: AN EXCLUSIVE STORY IN THE AUGUST 5 INDIAN EXPRESS REPORTED ON A "DIALOGUE" BETWEEN LEADERS OF THE CPI AND CP(M) AND SPECULATED ON THE POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE JOINT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES BY THE TWO COMMUNIST PARTIES. ALTHOUGH LEADERS SUBSEQUENTLY DENIED THAT SUCH COOPERATION WAS IN THE OFFING, THE SPECTRE OF CPI-CP(M) COOPERATION MUST BE A MATTER OF CONCERN TO MRS GANDHI, PARTICULARLY IN THE VOLATILE STATES OF KERALA AND WEST BENGAL. END SUMMARY.

1. AUGUST 5 INDIAN EXPRESS CARRIED A FRONT PAGE ARTICLE BY H.K. DUA CONCERNING A "QUITE DIALOGUE" BETWEEN THE CPI AND
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THE CP(M). ACCORDING TO THE STORY, CPI GENERAL SECRETARY C.

RAJESHWAR RAO HAD "DETAILED DISCUSSIONS" WITH CPM LEADER E.M.S. NAMBOODIRIPAD AND MR. M. BASAVAPUNNIAH LAST MONTH. ALSO, CPI RAJYA SABHA LEADER BHUPESH GUPTA IS REPORTED TO HAVE MET WITH WEST BANGAL CP(M) LEADER JYOTI BOSU. DUA WROTE THAT FURTHER DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN LEADERS OF THE TWO PARTIES ARE POSSIBLE. ALSO THAT AT ITS MEETING IN CALCUTTA TWO WEEKS AGO THE CP(M) CENTRAL COMMITTEE REVIEWED THE RESULTS OF THESE TALKS AND THAT THE CPI'S NATIONAL COUNCIL WILL DO LIKEWISE AT ITS MEETING IN HYDERABAD LATER THIS WEEK. DUA ALSO WROTE: "WHILE THE UNITY OF THE TWO PARTIES DOES NOT SEEM TO BE A POSSIBILITY IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THE LEADERS OF THE TWO PARTIES APPEAR TO BE LOOKING FOR AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND JOINT POLITICAL ACTIVITY. WHAT SEEMS TO HAVE PROMPTED THEM TO GO IN FOR IT IS THE FEELING THAT WORKING SEPARATELY AND AT ODDS HAS NOT HELPED EITHER OF THEM."

2. ACCORDING TO THE STORY, AN UNDERLYING REASON FOR THE DIALOGUE IS THE "FEELING OF DISILLUSIONMENT OF THE MARXISTS WITH THE OPPOSITION PARTIES LIKE THE OLD CONGRESS, THE BLD, JANA SANGH, AND THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND OF THE CPI WITH THE LEFT IN THE CONGRESS PARTY WHICH IT FINDS RATHER PASSIVE. IN THE CPI THINKING A UNITY OF THE LEFT FORCES OUTSIDE THE CONGRESS WILL BOOST THE MORALE OF THE LEFT IN THE CONGRESS. THE CPM LEADERS DO NOT REGARD THE LEFT IN THE CONGRESS WITH MUCH RESPECT, BUT WOULD NOT MIND ATTEMPTS AT UNITY OF LEFT FORCES OUTSIDE THE CONGRESS PARTY." DUA ADDS THAT THE ORGANS OF THE TWO PARTIES "SEEM TO HAVE TAKEN A HOLIDAY" FROM THEIR USUAL EXCHANGE OF INVECTIVE.

3. THE AUGUST 6 EDITION OF THE INDIAN EXPRESS CARRIED A STORY IN WHICH CPI AND CP(M) LEADERS REACTED TO THE DUA ARTICLE BY QUALIFYING THE EXTENT TO WHICH JOINT ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES COULD BE EXPECTED. SPEAKING TO REPORTERS IN TRIVANDRUM ON AUGUST 5, NAMBOODIRIPAD ACKNOWLEDGED THAT A "DIALOGUE" HAD TAKEN PLACE, BUT CAUTIONED THAT THE TALKS HAD CAUSED NO CHANGE IN THE BASIC POLITICAL STANCE OF EITHER PARTY. HE SAID THAT THE TALKS WERE INTENDED TO EXPLORE THE CHANCES OF "UNITED ACTION ON THE BURNING PROBLEMS OF THE DAY," AND NOT TO TRY AND FORCE A POLITICAL UNITED FRONT OF THE TWO PARTIES. NAMBOODIRIPAD SAID THAT THE CP(M) CON-

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INUED TO SUPPORT THE CONCEPT OF A FRONT OF LEFT AND DEMOCRATIC FORCES AND WAS PREPARED TO JOIN HANDS WITH OTHER PARTIES IN CARRYING OUT JOINT ACTIVITIES ON CERTAIN ISSUES. HE CLAIMED THAT THE CPI ON THE OTHER HAND CONTINUED TO SUPPORT A UNITED FRONT WITH THE CONGRESS.

4. SPEAKING AT THE PARTY'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEETING IN HYDERABAD, CPI GENERAL SECRETARY RAO SAID THAT THE TALKS

BETWEEN CPI AND CP(M) LEADERS HAD NOT BEEN FRUITFUL. HE ADDED THAT ANY JOINT ACTIONS BY THE TWO COMMUNIST PARTIES MUST BE FOUNDED ON THE BASIS OF POLICIES, AND NOT ON ANY PARTICULAR SLOGANS.

5. COMMENT: THIS LATEST FLURRY OF SPECULATION ON POSSIBLE JOINT ACTION BY THE TWO COMMUNIST PARTIES MAY WELL DIE DOWN IN REACTION TO THE DUA ARTICLE. HOWEVER, DESPITE THIS BACK-PEDALING, THE SPECTRE OF SUCH COOPERATION MUST BE A MATTER OF CONCERN TO MRS GANDHI. THE MOST IMMEDIATE PROBLEM WOULD INVOLVE THE SITUATION IN KERALA, WHERE CPI/CP(M) COOPERATION AGAINST CONGRESS COULD PRODUCE SERIOUS UNREST AND POSSIBLY EVEN VIOLENCE WITHIN THE STATE. A NUMBER OF CONGRESS POLITICIANS IN KERALA WOULD LIKE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT EXCLUDING COMMUNISTS, BUT MRS GANDHI DOES NOT APPEAR TO WANT TO RISK A UNITED "LEFT" OPPOSITION IN KERALA WHICH MIGHT ALSO PRODUCE A POTENTIALLY EVEN MORE DANGEROUS "LEFT" OPPOSITION IN WEST BENGAL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL STABILITY, COMMUNISTS, PARTY ALLIANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976NEWDE11568
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760306-0864
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760877/aaaacpdb.tel
Line Count: 134
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 NEW DELHI A-52
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 MAY 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <01 SEP 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPECULATION ON CPI-CP(M) "DIALOGUE"
TAGS: PINT, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006